

## Why Wi-Fi?

**Tamme and Carl Tannehill**  
**Owners, Coffee Beanery cafes**  
**Louisville and Lexington, Ky.**

The Tannehills were stumped.

How could they stay on top of their growing enterprise, with up to 50 employees, without pricey investments in more managers? The answer: wireless Internet access.

Tamme and Carl Tannehill run their Coffee Beanery stores from a home office in Louisville, where they have one store. They have two more 75 minutes away in Lexington.

Tamme Tannehill, 43, frets that runaway labor costs could eat into her small chain's more than \$1 million in annual revenue. That was happening at a new Lexington store opened in June, where payroll gobbled up 35% of sales.

"I've got a new business that I'm trying to build from scratch," Tannehill says. "If you stay at 35% of sales, you're not going to stay in business for long."

The single manager for the Lexington stores couldn't be in both places at once. So Tannehill installed four digital video cameras in the two stores, trained on employees and customers, allowing her to watch the stores remotely.

The Remote Eyes cameras and Wi-Fi gear, from Odyssey Technologies of Laurel, Md., cost about \$6,000.

Tannehill uses a Wi-Fi-equipped laptop to tap images beamed across the Internet by the video cameras. If customers suddenly flood in, Tannehill reinforces the store with more workers. If business slows, she calls the store and sends workers home.

Since using the Wi-Fi and cameras, labor has plunged to 23% of revenue at the new store, nearly paying for the gear's cost. "We're doing more with less," Tannehill says.

She watches the action from home, the stores — or anywhere she can access a Wi-Fi connection. She and Carl even checked in during a recent Florida vacation. And that's a bit of the downside. Tannehill says the power to watch anywhere, anytime means she spends "way too much" time looking over employees' shoulders.

But in the long run, Wi-Fi and remote cameras make it easier to consider expanding. Are they looking for more stores? "Always," Tannehill says.

*By Jim Hopkins, USA TODAY*